



WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

*From The
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health*



State Profile 2002

*Delivering on the Nation's promise:
Safety and health at work for all people through prevention.*

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

NIOSH is the primary federal agency responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related illness and injury. NIOSH is located in the Department of Health and Human Services in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The NIOSH mission is to provide national and world leadership to prevent work-related illness, injury, disability, and death by gathering information, conducting scientific research, and translating the knowledge gained into products and services. As part of its mission, NIOSH supports programs in every state to improve the health and safety of workers. NIOSH has developed this document to highlight recent NIOSH programs important to workers and employers in New Hampshire.

The Burden of Occupational Illness and Injury in New Hampshire

- In New Hampshire, there are approximately 666,000 individuals employed in the workforce.¹
- In 2000, 13 workers died as a result of workplace injuries.²
- In 1999, the most recent year for which data are available, the rate of fatal workplace injuries was 2.2 deaths per 100,000 workers—below the national average rate of 4.5 deaths per 100,000 workers.²

The Cost of Occupational Injury and Illness in New Hampshire

In 2000, the most recent year for which data are available, a total of \$168.4 million was paid for workers' compensation claims by New Hampshire private insurers and self-insured employers.³ This figure does not include compensation paid to workers employed by the federal government and also underestimates the total financial burden for private sector businesses, since only a fraction of health care costs and earnings lost through work injuries and illnesses is covered by workers' compensation. Chronic occupational illnesses like cancer are substantially under-reported in workers' compensation systems because work-relatedness is often difficult to establish.

How NIOSH Prevents Worker Injuries and Diseases in New Hampshire

Health Hazard Evaluations (HHEs) and Technical Assistance

NIOSH evaluates workplace hazards and recommends solutions when requested by employers, workers, or state or federal agencies. Since 1993, NIOSH has responded to 20 requests for HHEs in New Hampshire in a variety of industrial settings, including the following examples:

North Woodstock, New Hampshire: Exposures at a Beauty Salon

In August 2000, a hairdresser requested an HHE at the beauty salon she had been renting and operating for 12 years to evaluate respiratory and sinus problems she had developed. NIOSH investigators recommended maintaining the air conditioner according to the manufacturer's instructions and possibly installing a slot hood to provide local exhaust ventilation in front of the work station. In addition, investigators suggested requesting assistance by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services to evaluate ventilation needs or additional information on hair products and health. Several additional suggestions were provided including using different beauty products, limiting the amount of hair spray used, continuing to wear gloves when handling hair color or hair permanent solutions, and consulting with an occupational medicine physician.

Wolfeboro, New Hampshire: Diesel Exhaust Exposure

In 1998, NIOSH responded to a request for an HHE from the New Hampshire Department of Labor to evaluate the diesel exhaust levels in the Wolfeboro Public Safety Building. Fire and police personnel occupying the building are exposed to diesel exhaust from fire apparatus. There was concern that asthmatic bronchitis was a health problem resulting from this exposure. Although NIOSH investigators found diesel exhaust was below recommended exposure limits, its concentration could vary depending on weather and vehicle operating conditions. Engineering controls to reduce diesel exhaust levels were recommended to alleviate health concerns, especially among persons who are sensitive to the presence of diesel exhaust, such as asthmatics. NIOSH investigators recommended implementing several controls including local ventilation for tail pipes, maintaining living quarters under positive pressure, weather stripping living quarters, and minimizing idling time of vehicles.

Building State Capacity

State-Based Surveillance

NIOSH funds the Adult Blood Lead Epidemiology and Surveillance Program (ABLES) in the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. Through ABLES, the agency's staff track and respond to cases of excessive lead exposures in adults which can cause a variety of adverse health outcomes such as kidney or nervous system damage and potential infertility.

Additional information regarding NIOSH services and activities can be accessed through the NIOSH home page at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html> or by calling the NIOSH 800-number at 1-800-356-NIOSH (1-800-356-4674).

¹U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Current Population Survey, 2000.

²DOL, BLS in cooperation with state and federal agencies, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 1999-2000.

³National Academy of Social Insurance, *Workers' Compensation: Benefits, Coverage, and Costs, 2000 New Estimates*, May 2002.